Extension of tenure of the Liberhan Commission

1936. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the tenure of the Liberhan Commission of Enquiry probing the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya has been further extended;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the main obstacles before the Commission which stands in the way of speedy conclusion of the enquiry; and

(d) the steps initiated by Government to eliminate these obstacles?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The tenure of the Commission has been extended upto 31st December, 2000.

(c) and (d) Some of the persons, who were issued notices by the Commission among others, under Rule 5 (2) of the Commission of Inquiry Rules, had gone on petitions against these notices in Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court and obtained stay order. These petitions were dismissed in default on 15.5.97 and subsequently restored to their original numbers by the Court on 23.7.1997. Government of India have already filed applications before Lucknow Bench to expedite the matter and also to clarify whether the stay order which was vacated on 15.5.97 has been restored on 23.7.97 alongwith the Writ Petitions. Some of the witnesses summoned from time to time, sought extension of time remained absent on personal grounds, due to illness and pre-occupation with official work.